

The Fairy Lover

by Mathurin Kerbusso

A song from Armorica fair
I sing this day to thee.
A tale from sweetest Brittany
Where Arthur's folk did flee.
Where Iseult of the Whitest Hand
Brave Tristan first did see,
And found the knights of Charlemagne
Their rocky graves would be.

A vile man was Avoez
Usurper, lecher, thief.
He stole the lands of Lanascot,
Brought country round to grief.
Forced marriage upon Lisabel
And locked her in his keep.
His sister set to guard her there
Till heir for him bore she.

For seven years poor Lisabel
Did never see the sky.
Her spirit broken, and her heart,
She was about to die.
She prayed, "Dear God, please send a knight,
My secret love to be,
A knight from tales my mother told
Of lands beyond the sea."

The fairy king of Mandevant
Did hear her mournful cry,
And in the form of goshawk
Eudemarec he did fly.
The answer to her prayer
The fairest knight in either world.
Eudemarec lay with Lisabel
As night's dark cloak unfurled.

The guardian sister, Moravik,
Knew something was not right.
Watched Lisabel's fair countenance
Grow brighter night by night.
Then once upon a time she hid
And spied the lover's tryst.
When Moravik told Avoez
He shook his dreadful fist.

His rage it was a thing to see
He swore that blood would spill.
Had masons set four sharpened pikes
In the lady's window sill.
That night when Eudemarec came
To join his lady fairest
He flew into the cruel blades
And found his death blow there.

Eudemarec said to Lisabel,
"My lady, shed no tears,
I'd rather to have loved you than
To live ten thousand years.
I would not have it other, dear,
My life has been complete.
No better deathbed could I find
Than in these arms so sweet."

"A son you soon shall bear of me,
And Yonec call his name.
Upon your husband Avoez,
I cast this dreadful bane;
Aspell he'll not remember me,
Nor ever I was here.
And as his own beloved son
Our child he shall rear."

“And when our son shall be full grown
And known throughout the land,
You'll know the time to tell him sooth,
My sword place in his hand.
And as his time of justice comes
Avoez shall recall
The evil deed that he has done
Just as the stroke shall fall.”

“Be brave my lady Lisabel,
Mourn not for me this night.
For when we two are joined again
Our love will burn as bright.
And never will we part again,
Together we shall fly
Through all the starry Universe,
But now, my dear, goodbye.”

Another tale there could be told;
The birth of good Yonec.
Of how he came to manhood and
Earned gold chain for his neck.
Of how he learned his fathers' name,
Avenged his parents dear.
But that's another story and
I shall not tell it here.